

## Claims

- [c1] 1. A method for managing changes in a bill of materials, the bill of materials listing a plurality of parts, the method comprising:  
providing an editor, the editor having a first frame and an adjacent second frame;  
displaying a parts list in the first frame of the editor, the parts list forming a subset of the bill of materials;  
displaying search results from a search for parts in the second frame of the editor.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1 wherein providing an editor comprises opening an editor by clicking on an editor button.
- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1 wherein displaying a parts list comprises providing an expandable list of parts.
- [c4] 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising searching for parts by entering either type or name of a part in a third frame of the editor.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing search results in an expandable list format in the second frame.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising adding a part selected from the search results to a selected location in the parts list.
- [c7] 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising selecting an add button and prompting for entry of part attributes prior to adding a part to the parts list.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1 further comprising removing a part from the parts list by selecting a part to be removed and selecting a remove button.
- [c9] 9. The method of claim 1 further comprising replacing a part selected from the parts list with a part selected from the search results.
- [c10] 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising changing an attribute value of a part in the parts list.

- [c11] 11. The method of claim 10 wherein changing an attribute value of a part comprises opening a dialog box and changing a quantity, sequence number, feature and option code, or feature and option number of a part.
- [c12] 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the first frame and the second frame include scroll bars.
- [c13] 13. The method of claim 4 wherein the third frame includes a button bar containing a search button, an add button, a remove button, and a replace button.
- [c14] 14. The method of claim 4 further comprising presenting the first, second, and third frames simultaneously visible in their entirety.
- [c15] 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the first, second, and third frames are contained in a main screen accessible via the World Wide Web.
- [c16] 16. The method of claim 1 wherein each part in the parts list includes a details icon, further comprising selecting a details icon and displaying details of a part adjacent the selected details icon within the second frame.
- [c17] 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising toggling between the search results and the details within the second frame.
- [c18] 18. A system for managing changes in a bill of materials, the bill of materials listing a plurality of parts, the system comprising:  
an entry device for entering information related to the parts;  
a screen for viewing an editor; and  
a signal processor having memory for storing signals including program signals defining an executable program for,  
providing the editor, the editor having a first frame and an adjacent second frame;  
displaying a parts list in the first frame of the editor, the parts list forming a subset of the bill of materials;  
displaying search results from a search for parts in the second frame of the editor.

- [c19] 19. The system of claim 18 wherein the first frame and the second frame occupy discrete portions of the screen.
- [c20] 20. The system of claim 19 further comprising a third frame comprising a data entry text box and function buttons, the third frame occupying a discrete portion of the screen.
- [c21] 21. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for managing changes in a bill of materials, the bill of materials listing a plurality of parts, the storage medium including instructions for causing a computer to implement a method comprising:  
providing an editor, the editor having a first frame and an adjacent second frame;  
displaying a parts list in the first frame of the editor, the parts list forming a subset of the bill of materials;  
displaying search results from a search for parts in the second frame of the editor.
- [c22] 22. A user interface for managing and navigating a bill of materials, the bill of materials listing a plurality of parts, the user interface comprising:  
a first frame including a parts list listing at least a subset of the bill of materials;  
a second frame providing search results of a search or details of a part listed in the first frame;  
a third frame containing function buttons for performing operations between the first frame and the second frame.
- [c23] 23. The user interface of claim 22 wherein the first frame, second frame, and third frame each occupy a discrete portion of a main screen of an editor.
- [c24] 24. The user interface of claim 22 wherein the third frame includes a data entry text box for entering information for searching.
- [c25] 25. The user interface of claim 22 wherein the function buttons include a search button, an add button, a remove button, and a replace button.
- [c26] 26. The user interface of claim 22 wherein the first frame includes a details icon

adjacent each part in the parts list, wherein clicking on a details icon of a selected part displays details of the selected part in the second frame.

[c27] 27. The user interface of claim 22 wherein the parts list and the search results are each expandable lists including expand and collapse icons.

[c28] 28. The user interface of claim 22 wherein each part listed in the parts list and each part listed in the search results includes a selection area for selecting a part for performing an editing function.

[c29] 29. The user interface of claim 22 further comprising a dialog box overlapping at least one of the first frame, the second frame, and the third frame, the dialog box including data entry text boxes for editing a part's attributes.

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